



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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MOUSE TESTS POSITIVE FOR HANTAVIRUS ***County Urges Residents to Use Caution When Cleaning Up Rodent Droppings***

A mouse trapped in Campo during routine monitoring has tested positive for the potentially deadly hantavirus, San Diego County Department of Environmental Health officials said Thursday.

County officials said it was normal to find rodents carrying hantavirus in San Diego County, but that they rarely posed a threat to people if they remained in the wild. However, they said people should protect themselves whenever cleaning up after rodents whenever they found them in their homes or on their properties.

"The best way to protect against exposure to hantavirus is by keeping rodents out of your homes, garages and outbuildings," said Environmental Health Director Jack Miller. "Hantavirus can become dangerous if infected rodents get indoors and people come into contact with their droppings."

Wild rodents, primarily deer mice, can carry hantavirus and shed it through their saliva, urine and feces. People can breathe in the virus through the infected dust from rodent droppings and nesting materials. The virus can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, a sickness that begins with flu-like symptoms but can lead to severe breathing difficulties and even death in some cases.

Miller said people can help protect themselves by taking some simple steps:

How to Avoid Exposure:

- Eliminate rodent infestations immediately.
- Avoid rodent-infested areas and do not stir up dust or materials that may be contaminated with rodent droppings and urine.
- Clean up rodent droppings and urine using the wet cleaning method described below.

Use "wet-cleaning" methods to prevent inhaling the virus:

- **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM INFESTED AREAS.**
- Ventilate affected area by opening doors and windows for at least 30 minutes.
- Use rubber gloves. Spray a 10 percent bleach solution (2 tablespoons bleach to 1 cup of water) onto dead rodents, rodent droppings, nests, contaminated traps, and surrounding areas and let the disinfectant stand for at least 15 minutes before cleaning. Clean with a sponge or a mop.
- Place disinfected rodents and debris into two plastic bags, seal them and discard in the trash.
- Wash gloves in a bleach solution, then soap and water, and dispose of them using the same double-bag method. Thoroughly wash your bare hands with soap and water.

For more information, contact the County Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888 or visit <http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/pests/hantavirus.html>.

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